Off-Campus Resource Centre

www.macoffcampus.ca

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Office Hours
Monday – Friday
9:00 am to 4:00 pm
# Living Off-Campus

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Congratulations, you’ve made two great decisions: coming to Mac and living off-campus!

There are great places to explore and lots of fun to be had both at and around the University. Mac is also an excellent place to study, which is probably why you’re here in the first place!

Whether you live at home and commute to campus, or if you live in a local student rental unit, this booklet will become your compass for navigating your way around campus, your neighbourhood and Hamilton at large. Have questions about where to go when you’re sick or stressed, where to buy groceries in Westdale, or what exactly the mysterious “Cootes Paradise” is? Look no further – we’ve included lots of handy information and tips inside to get you started and keep you connected while you’re here.

If, however, we’ve overlooked something that you’re seeking, contact the McMaster Student’s Union (MSU) Office or the Off-Campus Resource Centre, both conveniently located inside the MUSC. (Wondering what the MUSC is – check out the “McLingo” section inside).

So, happy house-hunting or contented commuting!
Whatever your living situation may be...

Enjoy your time at Mac!

McMaster University’s Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities

McMaster University is a community dedicated to furthering learning, intellectual inquiry, and personal and professional development. Membership in this community implies acceptance of the principle of mutual respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it.

The University regards and treats students as responsible individuals who are free to organize their own lives, behaviour and associations, subject to the laws of the land and to University regulations. The laws and regulations exist to ensure the rights of all members of the McMaster community. With respect to students, these rights, and the responsibilities that accompany them, include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Of course, you retain all your ordinary RIGHTS as a citizen when you become a member of the University community. By the same token, as a student you continue to have the RESPONSIBILITY to abide by all Federal, Provincial and Municipal laws and regulations in addition to the University’s own policies. The University may decide to impose and enforce its own discipline procedures, pursuant to its policies in addition to any enforcement procedures of civil authorities.

2. Subject to availability of the University’s resources, you have the RIGHT to participate unhindered in the academic, intellectual, cultural and social life of the University. You have the RESPONSIBILITY to respect the rights of others to the same participation by refraining from actions that threaten or disrupt classes, meetings, events or other academic activities, or that prevent others from freely expressing their views.

3. Pursuant to the laws of Canada and Ontario, you have the RIGHT to safety and security of your person in an environment free from harassment, intimidation, discrimination or assault. You have the RESPONSIBILITY to treat others with respect and to refrain from acts of harassment, intimidation, discrimination or assault.

4. Pursuant to the laws of Canada and Ontario, you have the RIGHT to safety and security of your personal property. You have the RESPONSIBILITY to refrain from acts of theft, willful destruction or vandalism of the property of others.
History of McMaster University

McMaster University was founded in 1887, named after Senator William McMaster, who bequeathed substantial funds to endow “a Christian school of learning”. The first buildings were erected in Toronto, and offered courses in arts and theology.

In 1930, the University moved to its present home in Hamilton. The original six buildings still remain on the campus — Wallingford Hall (still remaining as an all-female residence); Edward’s Hall (originally all-male residence, now co-ed); Hamilton Hall; University Hall, the Refectory and the President's Residence. In 1957, the University became a non-denominational school, but continued its Baptist connection through the incorporation and affiliation of a theological school, McMaster Divinity College.

In 1974, a single Vice-President (Academic), now called Provost and Vice-President (Academic) was appointed, and the Faculties were lead by Dears.

Today, the University is overseen by the Board of Governors and the University Senate, the academic governing body. The Senate is comprised of representatives of the teaching and administrative staff, Board of Governors, student body and alumni. Financing for the University comes from the provincial and federal governments, tuition revenue, gifts of support, income from the endowment fund, revenue generating operations and public and private research support.

Living at Home and Commuting

Living at Home

Parents will sometimes have trouble accepting that their “little kids” are growing up. If you’re living with your family, a good relationship with your parents will make your time at McMaster a lot more enjoyable. Remember: In order to be treated like an adult, you must act like one so sit down with your parents and negotiate for more freedom. Calmly discuss curfews, privacy, phone use and other house rules. The pressures and demands of a university education may not be appreciated by everyone in your family, so adjusting to your life at university will take some time, effort and patience on everyone’s part. Be willing to compromise.

Here are some quick tips to make living at home easier for everyone.

- Consider investing in a cell phone so that you can keep in touch with those at home.
- Always let someone know where you are.
- Have your class schedule and a list of the dates of major tests or assignments available for your family to see.
- Keep a list of important names and numbers where your family members can reach you if necessary.
- Even if you are a student, you’re still a member of the family. Make an effort to help with chores around the house and try to make it home for dinner a few times a week to share a meal and catch up on each other’s lives.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The University Library contains over 2 million volumes, subscribes to over 20,000 print & electronic journal titles, and has over 200,000 e-resources.
- The Bertrand Russell Archives are housed in Mills Memorial Library.
- There is a nuclear reactor on campus (used for research purposes only).
- An Olympic length-size pool is inside the Ivor Wynne Centre (recreation centre).
- The campus borders on the Royal Botanical Gardens, which offers many trails to explore and exercise on.
- The William J. McCallion Planetarium, housed in the Burke Science Building, is open to the public and can be booked for private viewings as well.
- Martin Short (comedian/actor), Lincoln Alexander (former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario), Ivan Reitman (film director) and Roberta Bondar (astronaut) are all graduates of McMaster University.

McMaster offers 141 undergraduate degree programs in 6 Faculties: Humanities; Business; Engineering; Science; Social Sciences; Health Sciences

Other areas of study include: Arts & Science Program; Indigenous Studies; Midwifery; School of Social Work, to name a few.

There is a museum on campus – the McMaster Museum of Art – located in the same building as Mills Memorial Library.

DID YOU KNOW?
Living Off-Campus

- Be responsible. If you plan to be partying on-campus, don’t drink and drive. Make other arrangements – stay with some friends locally or carpool with friends. Make sure your family knows where you are.
- Earn greater independence by demonstrating your independence and maturity: do your own laundry; make your own lunch or dinner; wash your dirty dishes. If you were living off-campus in a rental unit, you’d have to do all these things for yourself anyway!
- Respect the house rules. Even though you may be older and more independent, it is still your parents’ house – so there may be some rules you’ll just have to accept while you’re living there.

The Long Road Ahead: Commuting to Campus

The cost of car maintenance, traffic, parking, and losing that extra half-hour of precious sleep in the morning, are a few of the factors that can make commuting a source of frustration during the school year. However, the long drive to school and back doesn’t have to be a bumpy ride. Here are a few tips to smooth the way.

Safety

Whenever you drive, make sure that you’re prepared for all situations.
- Have an emergency car kit with jumper cables, a flashlight and a warm blanket in case of a breakdown.
- Consider purchasing a cell phone.
- There are several gas stations around the McMaster University area so always have a full tank of gas for the ride home just in case you get slowed down in heavy traffic.
- Pay attention to weather and traffic reports for alerts about problems or delays. If the roads are a mess, arrange to stay at a friend’s house or residence. Make sure that those who expect you at home (i.e. your parents) know where you are so they don’t worry. For these types of situations you may want to consider keeping a small overnight bag in your car with a toothbrush and a change of “unmentionables.”

Special Winter Driving Precautions

- “Snow means slow” - Always drive according to the weather conditions
- Have a mechanic check your vehicle for winter readiness
- Plan on extra travel time
- Drive with your full lighting system on (even in daylight)
- Leave extra space between you and the vehicle in front of you
- Carry a survival kit which includes: first aid kit; “call police” sign; blanket and clothes; winter boots; candles & matches; booster cables; flares or a flashlight; tow rope; cell phone

- Do not attempt to pass a snowplow. You may experience white-out conditions or lose control from a ridge of snow left by the plow.
- Slow down for the flashing blue light; work plows travel only at 70 km/hr. and sanders at 50 km/hr.

Rest and Relaxation

While you’re on campus for the day, there are plenty of places to go between classes to relax and socialize. Here’s a short list of places to hangout on (or near) the McMaster campus: This list is not exhaustive! Go exploring!

- The Phoenix Restaurant in Wentworth House
- Hava Java on second floor of the Burke Science Building or in the basement of Chester New Hall
- Café 2000 in the Institute for Applied Health Sciences building
- Commons Marketplace in the Commons Building
- Café One – first floor of the Michael DeGroote Centre for Learning & Discovery
- Cafeteria or one of the many lounges in the Health Sciences Centre
- The House of Games in the McMaster University Student Centre – a building where you’ll also find many conference rooms (which can be reserved through an MSU club or committee), lounges and quiet places to sit or study
- Take a walk through Cootes Paradise
- Williams Coffee Pub across from the Health Sciences Centre, on Main St. W.
- Tim Hortons at the corner of Main St. W. and Hollywood St. N. (Open 24 hours a day!) or Tim Hortons in Westdale
- Second Cup in Westdale
- Don’t forget to check out the steps and benches all over the scenic McMaster Campus to soak up some sun or do a little “people-watching”.

Alternative Commuting Options:

Contribute to a cleaner environment and carpool when you can. This cuts down on pollution and traffic, as well as saving you money on gas and parking prices! The All-modes Commuting & Transportation (ACT) Office has a great web site with other ideas, as well as a link to a national carpool web site. Their web address is http://ACT.mcmaster.ca.

If you live in the Hamilton area, take the bus! Your unlimited bus pass on the HSR has already been paid (in your student fees) for the fall and spring terms.

The ACT also carries all GO Transit (Train & Bus) information for the Lakeshore West and the Hwy 407 West corridors. We now have a GO bus station right on campus, making your commute that much easier.
The Great House Hunt

Now that you’ve made the decision to live off-campus rather than living in residence on-campus, living at home with family or commuting, you may be wondering where to begin your search.

Wherever you decide to live, remember that it will be your home for the next eight to twelve months, or longer. Shop around. Be a little picky. You don’t have to settle for cramped or low-quality housing. Take the time to look around and find something that makes you feel comfortable.

Comparison of Living Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>On-Campus Living</th>
<th>Off-Campus Living 2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accommodations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Over 8 months)</td>
<td>$630/month*</td>
<td>$350/month + utilities = $425/month**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Over 12 months)</td>
<td>$5020</td>
<td>$3400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$60/week = $240/month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 months = $2900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8 months = $1920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL COSTS:</strong></td>
<td>$7920</td>
<td>$5,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* average cost of single room, per person
** average cost, based on single room in student house, shared living expenses
*** other meal plans may cost more or less

IMPORTANT

You are going to meet a stranger in an unknown situation. Take someone along with you to be safe. Second opinion is valuable when making a choice between two or three places!

Here are a number of things to consider:

When to Start

While landlords do advertise year-round, there are particular times of the year when certain types of housing are advertised in greater numbers.

For instance, if you’re looking for a student house with a group of friends (requiring five or more bedrooms), these larger homes are often listed in January and February for May occupancy. However, keep in mind that there are many more that become available later in the year, so don’t worry if you haven’t made a decision before the end of the school year and don’t feel pressured to sign a lease for the first house you see.

Remember that you are financially responsible for the rent (and the state of repair) while you are subletting if you choose to do so!

If you’re looking for someone to sublet your room, or if you’re a student looking for a place to stay for the spring and summer months, sublets usually begin to be advertised in early March and continue to be listed through the spring and summer. All available sublets can be viewed or listed on our website www.macoffcampus.ca

Apartments and rooms in shared accommodations are listed consistently throughout the year, but if you’re looking for something on your own (a “bachelor” or one-bedroom apartment), you’ll want to start looking early. There are lots available, but they can be taken quickly by other individuals seeking the same thing.

How to Search

There are so many things to think about when looking for a place to live, so why not let us make it easier for you? At McMaster, we have a program called the “Rental Accountability Program.” This Program was developed to assist students in their search for reasonable off-campus accommodations, by streamlining their selection process. It is a voluntary program for landlords to join, to help them maintain good quality homes for students to rent. By looking at these places first, you can be assured that these landlords are committed to their responsibilities as landlords and thus could make your search for suitable housing a lot shorter!

Please contact our office or visit our website for a full description of the Program and to have any questions answered. www.macoffcampus.ca; 905-525-9140 X 24086.

TIP

Ask your landlord for references (names and phone numbers of previous tenants). This is a great way to get an idea of current utility/heating costs or finding out how the landlord is about following up on repairs.
There are several ways of seeking out accommodation in the Hamilton area. These include:

**McMaster University’s Off-Campus Resource Centre (OCRC):** Located on the lower level of the McMaster University Student Centre (B112, ext. 24086), this is the primary resource on campus to assist students in their housing search. The Off-Campus Resource Centre primarily services students and acts as a listing service for landlords in the Hamilton area. The office provides categorized listings of available rental units (most easily viewed at www.macoffcampus.ca), lease consultations (we will read over a lease with you before you sign), referrals to legal and government offices, free use of telephones for local calls to prospective landlords, and educational materials and seminars about living and renting in the Hamilton area. It is the responsibility of the prospective tenant to inspect the premises, carefully read any tenancy agreement prior to signing, and to ensure that the accommodation is safe.

**Newspapers:** Pick up a copy of the Hamilton Spectator (the Saturday edition is the most comprehensive – or go online to www.thespec.com), the Renters News (a free publication that can be found at many convenience and grocery stores as well as online at www.rentersnews.ca), or have a look at some of the local neighbourhood papers.

**Cruise around the area:** Walking or driving around the area will often turn up “For Rent” signs; sometimes this is the only advertising the landlord uses.

**Word-of-Mouth:** Talk with other students about where they have lived, how they found their places and about their general experience living off-campus. This is a great way to benefit from other people’s knowledge. You can get the scoop on reliable landlords and may find yourself inheriting a great deal!

Where to Live (Location Location Location!)

Think about where you’ll need to be on campus and when you’ll need to be there in the coming year. Will you be at the library late at night and want an escorted walk home? The Student Walk Home Attendant Team (SWHAT) will help you out, but only within 15-20 minutes walking distance. Maybe you’d like a more central location downtown and want to put some distance between yourself and the University in your “off-time.” The OCRC listings are categorized by “zones” in order to help you find accommodation in an area suitable for your transportation needs or limitations.

**Zones**

**Zone 1 (West Hamilton - both sides of Main St. W.)** - Very high concentration of students. Generally a 5 to 30 minute walk to campus. A highly residential area, there are many student homes (3 - 8 bedrooms), basement apartments and high- and low-rise apartments located in these zones. Close to grocery stores and pharmacies. Excellent bus service.

**Zone 2 (South West Hamilton/Downtown) and Zone 3 (Hess Village/Downtown)** - This area is a 30 - 60 minute walk to campus. There are many high- and low-rise apartment buildings, apartments in houses and duplexes for rent. Close to downtown shopping and excellent bus service.

**Zone 4 (Dundas)** - Walking time to campus is 20 - 40 minutes. Small, quiet suburb of Hamilton bordering the north-west corner of campus. Some low-rise apartments, as well as rooms in landlord’s home. Good bus service.


**Zone 6 (North East Hamilton) and Zone 7 (South East Hamilton)** - Varied rental accommodations available. Accessible by bus.

**Zone 8 (Hamilton Mountain)** - Varied rental accommodations available. Accessible by bus, but requires transferring.

**Zone 9 (Outside Hamilton)** - Varied accommodations in Burlington, Waterdown, Stoney Creek, Brantford, and other bordering cities/towns.

What You Need to Decide Before You Start Looking (The Basics of House Hunting):

Looking for residence off-campus requires some serious thought. The accommodation you decide to rent will be your home for the next few months to a year! There are several things to consider before you even begin your search.

**Money**

When living off-campus, there are some factors people often forget to take into consideration. There’s a lot more to pay for than rent and tuition (eg. transportation, food, telephone, utilities, cable TV, laundry, internet connection, etc.) so know how much you can afford. Be aware of when your income becomes available (summer income, OSAP part-time work throughout the academic year). Make sure to ask if the landlord requires first and last months’ rent up-front.
The Off-Campus Resource Centre has put together a basic outline of the costs you may need to account for.

Sample Rents (May 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Accommodation</th>
<th>Average Rent Per Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Bedroom Apartment</td>
<td>$550 – 700*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Apartment</td>
<td>$450 – 550*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room in Landlord’s Home</td>
<td>$300 – 400*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room in Shared Accommodation**</td>
<td>$350 – 450* (per bedroom)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If paying at the higher end of these ranges, the cost of utilities is usually included.
** in house or apartment with other students

Utilities

Include: television cable, hydro (electricity), water, and heat (gas/oil/electric).

Does not include: phone, high speed or cable internet

Factors That May Affect the Cost of Utilities:

• Air conditioning is expensive.
• Dishwashers use a considerable amount of energy and hot water.
• Make sure taps don’t drip and that windows and doors are well sealed to prevent wasting water, heat and energy.
• Electric heat is more expensive than oil or gas. Oil is more expensive than gas.
• If the accommodation is heated by oil, is the tank full when you move in? Do you have to fill it before you move out?
• Are there laundry facilities in the accommodation and are they coin-operated or will you be going to a laundromat?
• Beware: there is a substantial activation fee to hook up cable, phone, gas etc.

Monthly Utilities – estimates per person (e.g. heat, hydro, water):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Accommodation</th>
<th>Warm Weather</th>
<th>Winter Weather</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared House (4-8 bedrooms)</td>
<td>$30 – 50</td>
<td>$50 – 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Apartment (2-3 bedrooms)</td>
<td>$20 – 30</td>
<td>$30 – 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bedroom Apartment</td>
<td>$40</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Type of Accommodation

The Off-Campus Resource Centre lists various types of accommodations, ranging from private bachelor apartments to rooms in shared places with the landlord or other students. While there is variety in the type of accommodation, there is also variety in cost. Always keep your budget in mind. Also, consider your living and study habits. How much do you like to share? Do you prefer a quiet study environment or are you happiest parked with your books in front of the TV in a busy common room? How many other students would you like to live with? All of these factors come into play when deciding on a type of accommodation.

Most students look for a place to live based primarily on how many bedrooms there are, so this is one way in which our listings are categorized in addition to the “type of accommodation.” All OCRC listings will show the total number of bedrooms in the accommodation, as well as how many of those bedrooms are currently available.

Types of Accommodation

Bedroom in Student House or Apartment – individual accommodation in an apartment or house shared by other students, usually a private bedroom with shared kitchen, bathroom and common area

Bedroom in Landlord’s Accommodation – a bedroom in a private home, usually fully furnished, shared kitchen, some with a private bath

Apartment in House – a self-contained unit within a house with private bathrooms and kitchen

High Rise Apartment – within an apartment building of more than six floors, a self-contained unit with private bathroom and kitchen

Low Rise Apartment – within an apartment building that does not exceed four floors a self-contained unit with private bathroom and kitchen

Above a Store Apartment – an apartment that is above a store, restaurant, etc...

Bachelor Apartment – typically one “open concept” room with a private bathroom and kitchen area

House – a full house rented by a group of students

IMPORTANT

Students should be aware of a City of Hamilton by-law requiring a designation of “lodging house” for units with five or more tenants/bedrooms. A “lodging house” designation impacts fire regulations, physical amenity requirements (i.e. bathroom facilities). Please contact Hamilton City Hall or the Hamilton Fire Department for further details concerning the by-law.
Roommates

The people you live with can really affect your year at school. When you start looking for a place, take some time to sit down with your potential housemates and have a frank, honest discussion about the basic setup of your arrangement and how your life together will work on a practical day-to-day basis. Always remember that the little things do matter when you share living space. Compare living and study habits with potential roommates. Keep in mind that “best friends” don’t necessarily make “best housemates.”

Here are a few common housemate concerns to be discussed:

- Should the rent be split evenly or should there be a premium for single or larger rooms?
- Will any additional roommates be allowed?
- What will happen during the summer months?
- Does a subtenant have to be approved by all the remaining housemates?
- Do they need to be a non-smoker or the same gender as the remaining tenants?
- Who will do the dishes, clean the toilet, buy groceries, cook dinner, take out the garbage, etc.?
- Do people have certain standards for the above chores that should be communicated to the group?
- What time will the stereo be turned off or TV turned down?
- Who is responsible for paying the cable, telephone, etc. and when is everyone’s share due?
- Is it acceptable to have overnight guests and how often? Can they eat your food?

Cooperative Cohabitation . . . Life with Housemates

Learning to live with a housemate can be an adventure. Sometimes things work out really well and you become life-long friends. Sometimes you have very little in common and lead very separate lives. Relationships of all kinds have high and low points, but the challenge is learning how to manage these ups and downs.

Communication

Open and honest communication, right from the start, is a must. This means clearly identifying everyone’s expectations and working together to sort out any problems. Stress, a part of daily life in university, can often interfere with good communication, but being sensitive to this fact may help you to understand a housemate’s behavior. There will be conflict at some point in the year, whether it’s about noise late at night, dishes left in the sink, or who’s turn it is to take out the garbage. Try to discuss the problem calmly without getting personal.

Respect and Consideration

It sounds so simple, but it can be so hard! Respect and consideration toward each other is something people are always encouraged to demonstrate, but when stressors are high you should give extra thought as to how your actions impact the people around you.

Privacy and General House Rules

Whether you’re in a big house or a small apartment, it’s the little things that can drive you crazy. You may need to set some boundaries with your housemates regardless of how many of you live there. Study space, noise levels, visitors, use of the phone line (for calls and internet), smoking, borrowing personal property and how food will be shared and replaced are all important issues that need to be clearly understood among housemates. Let everyone know your expectations and listen to theirs. Be honest and up front. It may turn out that your expectations are completely compatible or you may need to come to a compromise. Give a little, take a little. For some people, regular house meetings to discuss problems or to simply catch up on each other’s lives in the hectic pace of the academic year, are great ways to sort things out. For others, a more formal Housemate Agreement may go a long way to resolving problems. (Stop by OCRC in the University Student Centre, B112, to pick up a sample agreement!)

TIP

Tell the people you are living with about your tests, essays and other academic deadlines, or keep a calendar of everybody’s important dates on the fridge in the kitchen!

TIP

Set boundaries around the use of your space (e.g. designate cupboards in the kitchen or shelves in the fridge for each person, decide whether shoes should stay on the floor by the front door or do they have to be put on a shoe rack or in a closet).
Tenant’s Insurance

Your landlord should have appropriate house insurance to cover the property in case of fire, etc., but it will be up to you to ensure your personal belongings are protected against theft, water damage, etc. Tenant’s insurance is offered by most insurance companies, and is quite affordable.

Steps for Getting Insurance:

**Step One:** Ask your parents if you are covered under their insurance plan. If so, what does it include? Does it cover your belongings, but not liability in case of an injury?

**Step Two:** If you are not included in your parents’ package, shop around. There are many insurance companies listed in the Yellow Pages of the phone book. Get at least three quotes.

**Step Three:** Fill out an application and the insurance company will assess how much your insurance will be.

**Step Four:** Settle a payment schedule. A one-time payment may the simplest, and will cover you for the whole year.

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**TIP**

- Record make, model and serial number of all electronic equipment, and make sure it is included in your tenant’s insurance
- Do not under-insure your belongings
- Take photos or a video of your room and contents as proof.

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**chapter four**

The Residential Tenancies Act

The RTA is the provincial legislation that governs the relationship of residential landlords and tenants in Ontario. Your rental accommodation may be an apartment, a house, or a room in a rooming, lodging or boarding house. These units are covered under the RTA.

However, if you share a bathroom and/or kitchen with the owner or the owner’s immediate family, your living accommodations will not be covered under the RTA. If you are planning to look for this type of accommodation, consider developing some “House Rules” that can cover many of the points discussed in this book. Ideally, these should be negotiated and signed as part of your original discussions with the owner.

The Landlord and Tenant Board is a quasi-judicial agency, set up under the RTA to provide information about the Act, and to resolve tenancy disputes either through mediation or adjudication. The Landlord and Tenant Board also provides landlords and tenants with information about the rights and obligations each has under the RTA. Their offices are located at 119 King St. W. in Hamilton, on the 14th floor.

They can be reached at 1-888-332-3234 or at www.ltb.gov.on.ca

Lease Agreements and Related Concerns

A lease may be written, verbal or implied (e.g. through the payment of rent). All are equally binding and can only be terminated in accordance with the RTA. The difficulty, however, for anyone relying on an oral agreement always lies in proving exactly what was agreed to. As a rule, always get any important agreements in writing. If the lease is in writing, it must include the legal name and address of the landlord, and you are entitled to receive a copy of the lease within 21 days. Never sign anything you do not understand!

**Same or Separate Leases**

Under most tenancy agreements, if you all appear on the same lease, you are each responsible to the landlord for the whole rent. Your obligation to the landlord is referred to as being “joint and several” in nature. If one of your housemates fails to pay their share of the rent, the landlord can look to the remaining housemates to make up the difference and will be in a position to begin eviction proceedings. It would then be your responsibility to pursue the defaulting housemate for their share of the rent. (It is best to seek legal advice concerning potential actions by the landlord and your rights against the defaulting housemate. Contact the Off-Campus Resource Centre for details about who to contact for legal advice.)

If you have separate leases, you are only responsible for the payment of the amount specified in your lease and the landlord can take no further action against you.
Terms

Prior to signing, a prospective tenant is free to negotiate the terms of the lease with the owner. You can amend a lease by deleting or adding sections and then having all parties to the lease initial the change(s). However, it is important to remember that the RTA will override any provisions of the lease, which are contrary to the Act. If you are confused as to whether a provision in a lease is permissible, you should consult a lawyer prior to signing a lease, or an offer to lease.

Offer or Application to Lease

Often offers to lease and applications to lease contain wording requiring you to sign other documents, such as a “lease in the landlord’s standard form”, if your application is accepted. Insist on seeing these forms and understanding them prior to submitting your initial application or offer. This will allow you to better understand what you are getting into, negotiate better terms if possible, or seek legal advice.

Length of Lease

Most landlords want students to sign a lease for 12 months (the “term” of the lease) because it can be difficult finding tenants for the summer months. You can try negotiating a shorter term, or alternatively, suggesting a reduced rent over the summer months; remember to always ensure such agreements are contained in the written lease contract. Generally, if you decide to stay in the same apartment for a second year, and do not sign a renewal, you will become what is known as a “month-to-month” tenant, with “security of tenure”, under the Residential Tenancy Act. This means that your tenancy is deemed to be renewed as a monthly tenancy agreement containing the same terms and conditions that are in the expired tenancy agreements, and subject to any increase in rental charges made according to the RTA.

Hidden Costs and Obligations

Any term in a lease that does not contradict the RTA may be valid. Therefore, it is important to review a lease very carefully. Pay particular attention to hydro and utility costs. For example, are you expected to pay for the water heater rental, or a portion of the hydro costs for the common areas such as laundry rooms and hallways? Whose responsibility is it to make sure the furnace is cleaned and, if necessary, repaired? Check to see what your responsibilities are in connection with the outdoor maintenance of the premises. Again, before you sign the lease agreement, be sure you understand it in full, and seek legal advice if you do not.

What to Expect in a Lease

- The name and address of the landlord and tenant(s);
- The address of the rental property;
- The agreed upon monthly rent amount, with or without utilities (be specific – Heat? Hydro? Water? Parking? Cable TV? Internet? Etc);
- The term of the rental period (usually 12 or 8 months, or month-to-month) and specific dates of occupancy;
- When the rent is due (e.g. on the first day of each month);
- The amount and terms of the rent deposit;
- Which repairs are your responsibility, and your obligation to do repairs at the request of the landlord (if applicable);
- Who is responsible for snow shoveling and cutting the lawn; who will supply the tools to do so, and maintenance of such;
- The notice period that the tenant is required to give when terminating a tenancy, such as 60 days prior to the end of the lease term;
- Subletting rules;
- Specific restrictions, such as no additional tenants, pets, smoking;
- When and how a landlord can enter the rental premises;
- Conditions for termination of a lease (by either party);
- Terms for dispute resolution (late payment, damage and repairs).

End of Tenancy – Giving Notice

All tenancies are terminated by giving the landlord *appropriate written notice of termination. Even when a tenancy is for a fixed term (e.g. a year), it is still necessary to give the landlord written notice in advance of your departure. The notice must be in writing; it must be signed by you or your agent; it must identify the address in question; and it must state the date on which the tenancy is to end. (See sample Tenant’s Notice to Terminate the Tenancy at the end of this book.)

* Appropriate Amount of Notice

TIP

The staff at the OCRC will read over a lease with you BEFORE you sign. This is a free service and no appointment is needed, simply come down to our office MUSC B112 Mon-Fri (9-4pm) and we will make sure you know what you’re signing!

REMEMBER

Remember that you are a monthly tenant if your lease expired and you stayed on without signing a new lease or a renewal. You may also be a monthly tenant if you pay monthly but have no written lease and have not agreed to a term.
The amount of notice you must give depends on the type of tenancy you have:

- A month-to-month tenancy requires at least 60 days written notice, specified to be effective on the last day of the month of the rental period (e.g., notice should be given by March 1st to end a tenancy on April 30th, if the rent is paid on the first of the month.)

- A tenancy for a fixed term (e.g., 1 year) requires at least 60 days written notice specified to be effective on the expiration date of the tenancy agreement. You cannot simply give the landlord 60 days notice part way through the term. The termination date cannot be earlier than the expiration date on the lease. If a notice is late, the tenant is advised to contact the landlord to determine whether or not s/he will accept the late notice. If the landlord refuses to accept the notice on the grounds that it was late, the student could seek legal advice, or alternatively, provide notice which otherwise complies with the minimum notice requirements under the Act.

When the term of your lease expires and if you simply move out without giving notice, you will be responsible under the original lease terms until the lease is properly terminated. Because your tenancy continues as a month-to-month tenancy, you may be liable for additional rental payments and for any other obligations under the lease.

Can You Leave Early?

Generally, tenants must abide by the notice of termination provisions discussed above.

A tenant with a one-year lease must wait for the end of the term discussed above and provide the landlord with the appropriate notice. There are a few exceptions:

- The landlord and the tenant can agree in writing to end the tenancy before the end of the lease
- Sometimes a landlord may be willing to accept a cash settlement (be sure to get this type of agreement in writing)
- The tenant may be able to assign the lease or terminate the lease early if the landlord will not permit assignments
- The tenant may, with the landlord’s consent, sublet the premises (although this will not relieve them of their obligations to the landlord)
- A tenant may have grounds (e.g., substantial lack of repair, substantial interference with the enjoyment of the unit, etc.) to ask the Landlord and Tenant Board to terminate the lease.

It is best to seek legal advice in these circumstances. If a tenant abandons the premises, the landlord can take action against the tenant and his guarantor, if any, for unpaid rent for the remainder of the lease, or until such time as a replacement tenant is found. As well, a tenant may be liable for interest and the landlord’s costs in obtaining the amount owed.

Assigning the Lease

When you assign your tenancy, you transfer all of your future rights and obligations under the original lease agreement to the new tenant. A tenant must have their landlord’s consent to assign a lease.

A landlord may permit assignments but reject a particular assignee, as long as they are not acting arbitrarily or unreasonably. A tenant may have the right to terminate a lease (with proper notice) if a landlord refuses to allow assignments. If you assign a lease without the consent of the landlord, the landlord may negotiate a new tenancy agreement with the person now occupying the residence.

It is best to obtain legal advice in these circumstances.

Re-signing a Lease

Your landlord cannot force you to sign a new lease or a renewal. At the end of the term you are automatically deemed to have renewed your lease as a monthly tenancy agreement on the same terms and conditions as your old lease, except for any permitted rent increases. This gives you more flexibility in terminating your lease the following spring. Of course, it also means that the landlord will have greater flexibility in terminating your agreement, if he or she has adequate reasons, as required by the RTA.

Termination of Tenancy by Landlord

Your landlord cannot terminate the tenancy against your wishes unless he or she has grounds under the RTA and has given you the required notice. In the absence of positive action on the part of landlord or yourself to the contrary, once your original lease expires, you continue automatically as a month-to-month tenant.

Your landlord must have a valid reason, as outlined in the RTA, for regaining possession of the property. Some of the grounds on which a landlord may give notice of termination are:

- Conversion of the premises to other than rental residential use
- Repairs or renovations so extensive as to require a building permit and vacant possession of the premises
- Demolition
- The landlord, or a purchaser of the property from the landlord, genuinely requires the premises for his own occupancy or that of a marriage partner or their children or parents
- The tenant has persistently failed to pay rent on the date it became due and payable

Eviction

Some of the grounds on which a landlord may give notice of termination are:

- Non-payment of rent
- Undue damage to the premises
- Conducting an illegal activity or business
- Conduct by the tenant (or another occupant of the unit or a person permitted in the building by the tenant) which substantially interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of the premises by the landlord or other tenants
• Impairment of the safety or other lawful rights of other tenants in the premises
• Allowing too many people on the premises on a continuing basis in contravention of health, safety or housing standards

If you receive a notice of termination, you should seek legal advice immediately. If the tenant remedies some of the grounds for the complaint, you do not have to move out on the termination date. If you do not move out, the landlord must apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board for an order to evict you. The landlord must inform the tenant that the tenant is entitled to dispute an application for an order terminating the tenancy and evicting the tenant.

Subletting

What is it?

Many tenants often try to sublet their apartments when they wish to move before the end of their lease term or to help cover expenses while they are away for the summer. You cannot charge the subtenant more rent than you pay the landlord.

It is important to remember that the original tenant remains liable to the landlord for any breaches under the terms of their lease. When you sublet, you remain ultimately responsible to the landlord for your obligations under the original lease, and your rights under the lease return to you when the period of subletting is over. Therefore, if a subtenant does not pay their rent or damage caused to the property, the tenant may find themselves paying the landlord and then chasing after the subtenant for reimbursement.

You do need your landlord’s consent to sublet. However, the landlord may not “arbitrarily or unreasonably” withhold his or her consent. The landlord can charge you for “reasonable out-of-pocket expenses” incurred in giving his consent to the subletting. You are entitled to an itemized list of such expenses and if you feel they are unreasonable, you may apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to have the amount examined. It is advisable to obtain the landlord’s written consent.

It is always preferable to sign a sublet agreement with the subtenant. In the event that you ever have to sue a subtenant for unpaid rent, a written agreement will provide proof of your arrangements.

Money Matters

Deposits

According to the RTA, it is legal for a landlord to ask you for a deposit equal to only one month’s rent. The landlord must obtain the rent deposit on or before entering into the tenancy agreement. This deposit can only be used towards the last month’s rent. This deposit provides the landlord with some security in the event that a tenant leaves the premises prior to the termination date. Additional deposits, including prepayment of first month’s rent, “damage deposit”, “cleaning deposit”, etc. are not permitted. Always ask for a receipt when you pay a rent deposit. The landlord may ask you for “first and last months’ rent”. This is a shorthand way of confirming that at the start of the lease you will be paying both the rental deposit and the first months’ rent.

* The landlord must pay you interest on your last month’s deposit, the percentage is based on a guideline set each year by the Provincial Government (call us for the updated % you can charge 905-525-9140 x24086). The interest must be paid to you yearly, even if you continue to live in the premises. If you requested this and your landlord did not comply, you are entitled to deduct this amount from your next rent cheque.

Rent

A tenant is responsible for paying the full rent when it is due. If the lease says the rent is due on the first of the month, then it is late as of 12:01 a.m. on the second day of the month. Overdue rent is often called “arrears of rent”. If you know you will be late with a rent payment, you should discuss the problem with the landlord. Sometimes a landlord may agree to defer a payment but this is entirely at the discretion of the landlord.

If a tenant is late with a rent payment a landlord may give them a notice of termination. If the tenant rents month-to-month or has a lease, at least 14 days notice of termination must be given. The tenant can avoid eviction by paying the full amount of the arrears of rent before the termination date. If the tenant does not pay the arrears the landlord can apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to evict them. If you are persistently late in the payment of your rent the landlord may give you a notice of termination even if you are not currently in arrears. In this situation, you should seek legal advice to ensure that your rights as a tenant are protected.

The landlord cannot, without an order of the Landlord and Tenant Board or a court, seize a tenant’s property for default in the payment of rent or for the breach of any other obligation of the tenant.

Rent Payments

A landlord cannot insist that you do the following:
• Pay twelve months rent in eight months
• Pay by post-dated cheques
• Pay some rent in advance

Also, be aware that if you pay rent in advance and the building is sold you may have the new owners asking to be paid again!

TIP

When subletting, even for a couple of months, it is often worth the expense of having your phone disconnected. Otherwise, you may be stuck with expensive long distance calls made by a subtenant who has long since vanished.
Rent Increases

When you move into an apartment you will have to negotiate the rent. There is no limit to what a landlord can charge. However, after your new rent is set, the limits for future rent increases are set out in the RTA.

Generally, your landlord can increase the rent 12 months from the date of your previous rent increase, or 12 months after you move in. Your landlord must give you at least 90 days written notice of an increase in the proper format.

Usually, the rent can only be increased by the guideline set each preceding August by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. However, the rent can be increased by more than the guideline in certain circumstances. If you receive a notice that the landlord is applying to increase the rent above the guidelines you should seek legal advice.

Under the RTA, you and your landlord can agree (in a form approved by the Landlord and Tenant Board) to a rent increase (to a maximum of 4% above the guidelines) to pay for a new service or a renovation in your apartment, such as the installation of a dishwasher. However, there is a five-day “cooling-off” period in case you change your mind. Before you make an agreement with your landlord, be sure that the improvement is worth the future increased rental payments. It may be possible in some circumstances, for you and your landlord to agree to a rent increase in excess of the 4% guidelines.

Rent Reduction

Under the RTA a tenant can apply for a rent reduction if:

• The landlord does not make repairs or improvements which they have undertaken to complete, or fails to provide services that were agreed to as a condition of an agreement to increase the rent

• There is a decrease in municipal taxes/charges by more than the prescribed percentage

• A service or facility is reduced or removed and the landlord has not reduced the rent.

Maintenance and Repair Issues

State of Repair When You Begin Renting

Discuss the condition of the apartment before you agree to lease. If the landlord promises to replace, clean, fix or paint anything, put it in the lease before you sign it (no matter how trivial it may seem), including a due date for completion. You may also want to include a clause permitting you to inspect the premises prior to the commencement of the lease to ensure that the work is complete and allowing you to withdraw from the lease agreement without penalty and with reimbursement of your deposit if you are not satisfied.

It is the landlord’s responsibility to remove any garbage and remaining items left by the previous tenant. When moving in it is always a good idea to inspect the premises with the landlord and record the condition of the premises including the walls, rugs and screens in the windows. You do not want to be held responsible for any pre-existing damages to the premises. A sample Damage Checklist can be found in OCRC on the lower level of the University Student Centre, B112.

Condition of the Premises While You Live There

As a tenant, you are responsible for the “ordinary cleanliness” of your premises. As well, you are responsible for any damage to the premises caused either deliberately or negligently by you, other occupants of your apartment, or anyone whom you permit on the premises. Undue damage to the rented premises may be grounds for eviction. You may have further obligations or restrictions contained in your lease. For example, the lease may provide that you can only repaint the apartment using a white or off-white colour. Furthermore, you need to clarify up front with the landlord, whose responsibility it will be for snow-shoveling and grass cutting, since there are city by-laws governing these situations.

Repairs

A landlord is responsible for maintaining your premises in a good state of repair and fit for habitation, and for complying with all health, safety, and housing and maintenance standards. If an issue arises, the first step is to talk to your landlord about your maintenance problems. Follow this up with a letter and be sure to keep a copy. If the landlord does not respond in a reasonable period of time, contact the City of Hamilton Property Standards Office and request an inspection. If an inspector finds that the repairs are necessary, a work order may be issued, listing the repairs that must be completed by a specified date. In addition, a tenant may file an application for an abatement in rent or the Landlord and Tenant Board may order the landlord to carry out the repairs.

Unless it is a true emergency, it is best to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board for an order authorizing the repair. Withholding rent or deducting the costs of the repairs (without court authorization) may result in the landlord applying for a notice of termination for non-payment of rent.

If one thing breaks the moment something else is fixed, you can apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board for an order to terminate your lease for lack of repairs. The Landlord and Tenant Board will need proof that you notified the landlord and gave him or her a reasonable time to remedy the situation. However, unless the circumstances are extreme, the Landlord and Tenant Board will be reluctant to grant an early termination. It would be best to seek legal advice in these circumstances.
Vital Services

It is illegal for a landlord to disrupt the reasonable supply of vital services to a tenant such as heat, hydro, natural gas or hot/cold water.

If you’re goldfish bowl has a layer of ice floating on top of it, phone the City of Hamilton Property Standards Office and ask for the local minimum heating standards. After advising the landlord, if the premises are still cold, request that an inspector visit the property.

State of Repair When You Leave

First, look at the terms of your lease. Usually, you are not responsible for “ordinary wear and tear”. So if the damage is minor (e.g. nail holes for pictures) you are probably not responsible. If you have made “improvements” (e.g. painting and wall papering) without the consent of the landlord, or if your lease prohibits this activity, the landlord is within his rights to insist that you remove or correct the “improvements” and restore the premises to their original condition.

• You should do a general cleaning before leaving,
• You should remove and dispose of items appropriately or you could be charged by your landlord.

Other Issues Covered Under the RTA

Your Right to Privacy

The RTA has a number of rules to protect the privacy of tenants. A landlord can enter a rental unit only in the following circumstances:

• A landlord can enter a unit without written notice if there is an emergency or if the tenant consents to the entry at the time of entry.
• After either a landlord or a tenant has given a notice of termination, the landlord may (after notifying or attempting to notify the tenant in advance) enter a unit without written notice between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. to show the premises to potential tenants.
• A landlord may enter a unit, after providing 24hrs written notice and between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. (a) to make repairs or to do work in the unit (b) to allow a potential mortgagee, insurer, or purchaser to inspect the premises or (c) for any other good reason as set out in the lease.

There are special provisions in the RTA if the landlord has agreed to clean the unit.
Number of Housemates

If you would like to add another housemate to the bunch, the RTA does not prohibit a tenant from taking any additional housemates, so long as the number of persons continuously occupying the premises does not violate housing, safety, or health standards or any other by-law. (Check with the City of Hamilton by-law office for more information.) In other words, your landlord cannot charge you an extra $75 a month for your friend to live there. If the new housemate regularly pays rent directly to the landlord, an implied tenancy may be created. Otherwise, the new housemate may have no relationship with the landlord and may be dependent solely on their agreement, often verbal, with the existing tenants. In no event can the landlord increase the rental payments during the term of the lease based upon the number of occupants.

The Party Problem

If your housemates have wild parties and have already been warned by the landlord that he or she will take steps to evict you if it happens again, the landlord may give notice of termination of tenancy. This can be done if the conduct of a tenant, another occupant of the rental unit, or a person permitted into the residence is such that it “substantially interferes” with the reasonable enjoyment of the residential premises by the landlord or another tenant. Furthermore, the landlord may be able to take legal action if the excessive noise is bothering the neighbours, which could be in violation of noise by-laws.

Discrimination

The Ontario Human Rights Code makes it against the law for landlords to refuse to rent to you because of your race, sex, sexual orientation, age, colour, nationality, religion, or place of origin. As well, they cannot discriminate against you because you are disabled, single, married, living common-law, receiving public assistance, or because one or more of your children live with you. If you feel you have been discriminated against, contact Human Rights and Equity Services at McMaster University, MUSC 212, ext. 27581 or the Ontario Human Rights Commission at www.ohrc.on.ca.

Locks

A landlord can change the locks only if they supply a key to the tenant. A tenant cannot change the locks without the landlord’s consent.

Guests

A landlord cannot interfere with a tenant’s reasonable enjoyment of a rental unit for all usual purposes. As well, a landlord cannot harass, obstruct, coerce, threaten or interfere with a tenant.
Pets
The RTA provides that a provision in a lease prohibiting pets is of no effect. However, it may still be a problem if your pet is substantially interfering with the reasonable enjoyment of the premises or is a dangerous breed. You may also run into trouble if the landlord or another tenant has serious allergies and is being affected by your pet. As well, local by-laws may prohibit certain species or the number of pets permitted. A landlord may evict a tenant with a pet under certain circumstances.

While on the topic, please remember that if you decide to adopt a pet, it is a long-term commitment – not just for the eight months while you’re attending school. Every year, the local animal shelters are overflowing with abandoned pets from students who have decided they no longer want the responsibility of owning an animal, or are returning to another city or country. Please act compassionately.

Landlord Rights
The RTA provides that tenants will not “harass, obstruct, coerce, threaten or interfere” with the landlord. Conduct that substantially interferes with the reasonable enjoyment of the premises by the landlord or other tenants, or which impairs the safety or other rights of other tenants may be grounds for eviction under the RTA. As well, the RTA contains a list of offenses that may be reported to The Investigation Unit of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. These offenses include changing the locks without the landlord’s consent and interfering with a landlord in the exercising of his/her rights under the RTA.

Living in the Community

Won’t You Be My Neighbour?!

Living off-campus can represent freedom for some – the freedom to negotiate your own house rules and standards. In reality, off-campus living brings with it a whole new set of responsibilities – to your housemates, to your neighbours, and to the Hamilton community.

McMaster is serious about its responsibilities both for and to its students in the wider community. This means the University offers what support it can for students living off-campus, and also expects students to represent the University well in the way they live and act in the community. Students, whether on- or off-campus, are members of the McMaster community, with both the rights and responsibilities that University membership involves.

Tips on Being a Good Neighbour:

Introduce yourself
Make a point of meeting your neighbours. Give them your name and phone number. They’ll be impressed with your openness, and it starts a relationship of trust and respect.

Be friendly
Wave and say hello when you see your neighbours, stop to say a few words, wish them a good weekend, drop off a Christmas card. Offers to help will score big time: rake leaves, clean the snow now and then from a neighbour’s sidewalk, give a ride to a neighbour who doesn’t drive, volunteer to babysit in emergencies.

Pay attention to visuals
The look of your home will have a big impact on how your neighbours react to you. Some hints: keep furniture inside, don’t clutter the front porch, don’t hang signs or banners in windows, clean up bottles and litter, keep beer bottles out of sight. Talk to your landlord to be clear on your responsibilities for mowing grass, raking leaves, and shoveling snow. Look for ways to make small property improvements your neighbours will notice.

Follow parking and traffic rules
Parking can be a real problem. Plan on having only as many vehicles as you have proper parking spaces. Parking is not allowed on sidewalks, lawns, within 3 metres of fire hydrants, or 9 metres from a crosswalk or intersection – all are illegal and subject to fines by the City of Hamilton. Play it safe – slow down in residential areas.
Follow garbage/recycling schedules and rules

Your neighbours can tell you what day garbage is picked up, or call the City for details. Only put out your garbage on those days. Stay within the garbage limit of six containers/bags. If the previous tenants left behind unwanted junk, or you have some to get rid of yourself, watch for special pick-up days on your Hamilton Waste Collection Calendar, or speak to your landlord about removal. It is your landlord’s responsibility to supply you with garbage cans with lids. For calendar and more info: http://www.hamilton.ca/public-works/waste-management

Take care of your yard

Be clear on whose responsibility it is to shovel snow and cut the lawn - yours or your landlord’s? If it is your responsibility to do the work, ask your landlord to provide you with the necessary tools to do so (eg. Lawn mower and shovel). Do the work in a timely fashion to avoid complaints from neighbours, or even a notice from the by-law office. Hamilton by-law requires that snow and ice be cleared from sidewalks within 24 hours of a snowfall, and that grass be no longer that 8 inches in height.

Use some discretion

Your neighbours may be offended by casual swearing, drinking alcohol, or too much physical closeness, on your porch or front lawn or in a public area. So, consideration is recommended – please move indoors. A friendly warning: Liquor License Act prohibitions mean that you can be charged for having open alcohol in your possession while on your front lawn or in the stairwell of an apartment.

Keep it quiet

Hey, be kind – your neighbours’ jobs and/or children mean they’re getting up early every day! Besides, noise at any time of the day is illegal if it is considered a nuisance by your neighbours and carries a large fine. Keep this in mind: please don’t sing, chant, yell, slam doors, honk your car horn, play loud music in the yard – you get the picture, right? Hint: noise carries a lot further at night, so save your good spirits until you’re inside with the doors and windows closed.

Party responsibly

If you’re having a party, let your neighbours know. They may be more tolerant if you don’t surprise them. Limit the number of guests and keep the party inside after 11 p.m.

Plan parking for your friends, and clean up afterwards.

If you plan to serve and exchange alcohol for money in any way - through ticket sales, admission at the door, passing the hat, or whatever, this is ILLEGAL. You and your housemates could face charges and criminal prosecution, resulting in you having a permanent criminal record. Think twice about the significant long-term ramifications of your actions!

Handle problems politely

If you’re a good neighbour, it’s not likely that you’ll meet an unfriendly reaction. But if you do, it probably means your neighbours have had a problem in the past, so just be polite and make sure their experience with you will help change their minds. If your neighbours have a complaint about you, listen, try to see it from their perspective, and change whatever you can. Don’t get involved in major disputes – yelling, swearing, increasing the complained about-activity, are all a waste of your energy and bad for your reputation and McMaster’s.

Safety

Hamilton, especially around campus, is relatively safe. Nonetheless, even in the safest of neighbourhoods every year there are a few reports of break-ins, peeping toms, and sexual assault. Having a neighbourhood of students has its benefits, but it can also attract certain kinds of crime. There are also safety issues related to your house – things like fire and health.

Safety cannot be overlooked when searching for an accommodation! Make sure that you check out your potential yard and street lighting, distance from transportation or campus, shrubs around the entrances and on the street. Do you feel comfortable here? Do you feel “good” about the landlord? Fire safety and carbon monoxide protection are extremely important. Are there smoke/carbon monoxide detectors in the unit? Is there a secondary exit from the unit (door, window)? If you are on the second floor or higher, is there a fire escape in proper working order from a door or window?

SWHAT (Student Walk Home Attendant Team)

If you’re on campus studying late, the safest way to walk home is with a friend. However, if you’re alone on campus and need to walk home, call SWHAT (Student Walk Home Attendant Team) at ext. 27500. Open 7 days a week, dusk to 1 a.m., September to April, SWHAT offers you a free accompanied walk with one male and one female volunteer across campus or to off-campus destinations (maximum 30 min walk from campus). Give them a call or check out their website (www-msu.mcmaster.ca/swhat) to volunteer. NEVER WALK HOME ALONE.

Break-Ins

To protect your house from a break-in, make sure that there are working locks on all the doors and windows and always lock the house when you leave. If you’re going home for Christmas or away for Reading Week (thieves know the school calendar) you may want to invest in a timer for your lights. Also, can you easily store electronic equipment (like computers, stereos, TV’s) somewhere, as well as portable items like jewelry and other small valuables? Ask a neighbour that you know to keep an eye on the house for you. Tell them your plans for the holiday and when you’ll be back. If they have a second car, they may be willing to park it in your driveway just to make the house look lived in. You might also leave a key with a trusted neighbour and ask them to check in on the house daily – maybe even turn lights on and off, etc.
If your house has been broken into, go to a neighbour’s house to call the police (911) in case the thief is still in the house. Don’t touch anything. Then call a friend to wait with you until the police arrive.

Fire Safety

Your landlord is required by law to ensure that the house is safe, and that there is a working smoke detector on each floor as well as a fire extinguisher. If you have serious concerns about the fire safety of your accommodation stop by the Off-Campus Resource Centre or call the City of Hamilton Fire Department, Prevention Division at 905-628-1380 for information on fire safety standards, prevention and inspections done free of charge.

Health and Safety

If you’ve noticed evidence of pests or vermin (e.g. mouse droppings) in your accommodation, call your landlord first. If your landlord is not able or willing to call an exterminator or solve the problem in some other way, then call the Off-Campus Resource Centre to let them know of the problem with the house and the landlord, and call the City of Hamilton Health Department at 905-546-3500. They can be reached for health concerns including pests, lack of heat, garbage etc. They will come and inspect the house free of charge to you, and if there is a problem they will deal with the landlord.

### chapter six

Exploring the Community

For the adventurous, or simply the curious, there are many points of interest and sources for recreation within the City of Hamilton and the surrounding area.

**Bikeways & Trails**

**Cootes Paradise** – accessible property belonging to the Royal Botanical Gardens, Cootes joins up with McMaster University behind the Residence Quads, with marked trails heading east and west. See if you can find the Lookout Tower!

**Desjardins Trail** – start your hike along the Hamilton Harbour at Princess Point (follow Longwood Rd. N. to its end). The trail heads east to Bayfront Park/Pier 4 Park, next to the Royal Hamilton Yacht Club.

**Dundas Peak** – follow the Bruce Trail to the top of the Dundas escarpment, and step out onto the rock ledge, overlooking the Valley and the surroundings. The view is magnificent!

**Dundas Valley Conservation Area** – a beautiful spot for hiking and picnicking, you’ll find open meadows, wooded areas with inter-woven trails, ponds, streams and waterfalls, as well as the Hermitage Ruins.

**Hamilton-Brantford Rail Trail** – part of the Trans-Canada Trail system, a converted railway line is now used for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The trail begins on Ewen Rd. (just south of Main St. W.) and runs west to the City of Brantford, passing through the beautiful Dundas Valley Conservation Area.

**Mountain Climbing** – Did you know Hamilton has a “mountain”? Some may laugh, but have you ever tried climbing it? At various spots along the base of the mountain, there are stairways (very long, steep, stairways!) that you can climb to get to the top of the escarpment. Look for them at the foot of Beddoe Dr. S., Dundurn St. S., James St. S. and along the Sherman Access (near Victoria Ave. S. & Charlton Ave. E.).

**Pier 4 Park** – At the top of Bay St. N., this is the perfect spot for rollerblading! Wide, smooth walkways following along the waterfront, boats in the harbour, seagulls drifting overhead, what more could you ask for?!

**Webster’s and Tew’s Falls** – while visiting the Dundas Peak, why not relax next door at Webster’s or Tew’s Falls? Webster’s is a beautiful tiered falls, while Tew’s, at 41 metres high, is only a few metres shorter than Niagara Falls.

**TIP**

Check out insurance riders on your parents’ policies – they probably will not cover an apartment/house. It might be best to find an agent in this area so that if something happens you are dealing with a “local” company.
Shopping

Ancaster Power Centre – located in Ancaster, just off the Lincoln Alexander Parkway (“the Linc”) and Highway 403, home to many box stores like Winners, Pier 1 Imports, Home Sense, Zellers, Future Shop, Silver City movie theatre and Staples, as well and many restaurants (eg. Montana’s, Jack Astor’s).

Canadian Tire – located on Gootes Drive in Dundas, here you’ll find automotive, sports and leisure and home products.

Downtown Hamilton – Check out the Hamilton City Centre and Jackson Square. Easily accessible by bus, these two conjoined shopping centers offer stores such as Fairweather and Le Chateau. You’ll also find Jackson Square Cinemas, where movies are cheaper than most other cinemas in Hamilton!

Futon Shop – located along Main St. West in the same plaza as Baskin Robbins, this is the perfect place for students looking for beds and affordable home furnishings.

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Living Off-Campus

- **Techwave Café** - located inside the Information Technology Building (ITB)

- **Café 2000** – located in the main lobby of the Institute for Applied Health Sciences, you’ll find a variety of fresh foods, snacks, Mr. Sub, Tim Hortons and Pizza Pizza

- **Hava Java** – stop by the second floor of the Burke Science Building for Starbucks coffee and a variety of delicious desserts

- **Mac Express** – with locations in Chester New Hall (serving Starbucks coffee), and John Hodgins Engineering, you’ll find fresh brewed coffee, doughnuts, muffins, beverages, sandwiches and more.

- **The Phoenix** – an affordable restaurant for those who are nineteen years of age and over with a patio, pool tables, video games and occasional live music, offering everything from beverages and wings to entrees and snacks, located in Wentworth House.

- **Quarters Restaurant & Night Club** - run by the McMaster Students Union, this restaurant is open for breakfast, lunch or dinner, offering a wide range of menu options, at affordable prices.

General Services & Resources

- **Campus Health Centre** – Staffed by registered nurses and medical doctors who provide medical assessments and treatment for illness or injury, annual physicals, birth control counseling, counseling and treatment of depression, eating disorders, insomnia and other emotional problems, allergy, a dispensing clinic, immunization clinic and counseling for any personal health concerns (e.g. nutrition, weight control, sexuality issues, physical fitness, smoking and substance abuse)

- **Campus Lockers** – Lockers cost only $25 dollars to rent for the academic year ($12.50 for one term). Enquire in the Stuff Store at Titles (located in the basement of Gilmour Hall)

- **Career Services** – an excellent resource center for career planning and counseling, offering resources for job hunting and ways to improve your resume and interview skills. Gilmour Hall 110, ext. 24254, http://careers.mcmaster.ca

- **Centre for Student Development (CSD)** – provides support, instruction and/or counseling with personal or academic concerns. The Centre also makes support available to students with disabilities and students who wish to improve their writing or English language skills. University Student Centre B107, ext. 24711, http://csd.mcmaster.ca, csd@mcmaster.ca

- **Emergency First Response Team (EFRT)** – highly trained volunteers who respond to medical emergencies on campus, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and their response time averages about one minute! University Student Centre 103, 905-522-4135 or ext. 88 (from any campus telephone)

- **Human Rights and Equity Services** - offers consultation and advice on human-rights-related issues of all kinds. They will listen to your concerns, discuss your options and intervene if that is your wish. Their services are completely confidential. University Student Centre, 212, ext. 27581, www.mcmaster.ca/hres.

- **Lifetouch Photography** - Get your grad photos taken here! Ground floor of the Student Centre, beside La Piazza. Ext. 26222

- **MSU Health & Dental Insurance Plan** – This plan, included in your registration fee, covers 80% of the cost on written prescriptions (excluding birth control) when presented to a participating pharmacy (see “Off-Campus Resources”). Show your student card and pay only 20% of the total cost. There is a limited period in which you may opt out of this plan. Contact the MSU Info Centre (ground level of University Student Centre) at ext. 21000 for more details.

- **Off-Campus Resource Centre** – a resource centre for off-campus students and a listing service for landlords in the Hamilton area. The office provides categorized listings of available rental units, referrals to legal and government offices, lease consultations (we will read over a lease before you sign!), free use of telephones for local calls to prospective landlords and educational materials and seminars about living and renting in the Hamilton area. University Student Centre (lower level) B112, ext. 24086, www.macoffcampus.ca, macoffcampus@mcmaster.ca

- **Off-Campus Meal Plan** – Hospitality Services offers a variety of meal plans to students living off-campus. ext. 27448, http://hospitality.mcmaster.ca/mealplan, express@mcmaster.ca

- **Office of the International Students’ Advisor** – provides services and programs for visiting international students, scholars, post doctoral fellows, and faculty at McMaster University. They also provide information and services involving personal, academic, financial and immigration matters. Gilmour Hall 104, ext. 24748, http://ois@mcmaster.ca, oissan@msu@mcmaster.ca

- **Office of Student Financial Aid and Scholarships** – Check out this office for information on financial support and services available to students at McMaster. Gilmour Hall 120, ext. 24319, http://oisa.mcmaster.ca/

- **Ombuds Office** - If you’re experiencing problems within the university, be it with a roommate, professor, department, whomever - come and meet with the Ombuds to discuss alternative, informal methods of resolving the dispute. The Ombuds is interested in ensuring all members of the McMaster Community are treated fairly and equitably. University Student Centre 210, ext. 24151, www.mcmaster.ca/ombuds, ombuds@mcmaster.ca

- **Pharmacy** - Fill your prescriptions; buy shampoo, bandaids, all your toiletries! Located on the ground floor of the Student Centre. 905-540-3787
Queer Students Community Centre (QSCC) - offers resources, support, education and awareness programs, a safe place on campus and weekly social events for students of all kinds: lesbian, straight, transgendered, gay, bisexual and those who are questioning. University Student Centre 221, ext. 27397, www.msu.mcmaster.ca/glbt, qecc@msu.mcmaster.ca

Society of Off-Campus Students (SOCS) – student organization that holds many social events, as well as participating in Welcome Week, Homecoming, intramural sports, and charity events. University Student Centre, Lower Level, ext. 27627, www.mcmaster.ca/socs

Student Health Education Centre (SHEC) – SHEC is a student volunteer wellness resource as well as a support center. The office provides peer counseling, literature on issues of health and sexuality, free condoms, lube, oral dams, VCF and pregnancy tests. University Student Centre 202, ext. 22041, www.msu.mcmaster.ca/shec, shec@mcmaster.ca

Student Accounts and Cashiers - to make payment to your student account, and other related financial matters, visit the office in Gilmour Hall, room 209, ext. 24478, www.mcmaster.ca/bms/finance/student/, student.accounts@mcmaster.ca

Student Walk Home Attendant Team (SWHAT) – Open 7 days a week, dusk to 1 a.m. from September to April, SWHAT offers you a free accompanied walk with a male and a female volunteer across campus or to off-campus destinations (maximum 30 min walk from campus). Give them a call or check out their website to volunteer. NEVER WALK HOME ALONE. University Student Centre 103, ext. 27500, www.msu.mcmaster.ca/swhat/

Travel Cuts - plan your trip for Spring Break, or discover backpacking opportunities across Europe! Great deals for university students. Located on the ground floor of the Student Centre, 905-777-9886, www.travelcuts.com

Union Market - located inside the Student Centre, this store offers great snacks, free-trade coffee, homemade soup and sandwiches, and the cheapest bagels on campus! Among other great deals on household items, to name just a few of their offerings.

Underground Media & Design - for all your printing and copy needs. University Student Centre basement, ext. 22027

chapter eight

Off-Campus Services and Resources

Landlord and Tenant Board

The Landlord and Tenant Board provides information about, and answers questions regarding the Residential Tenancies Act.
• 119 King St. W, 14th floor, 1-888-332-3234, www.ltbc.gov.on.ca

Tenant Legal Advice

These clinics provide free information and advice to students.

Dundurn Community Legal Services – for residents of the downtown area and west-end Hamilton.
• Jackson Square, 110 King St. W., Plaza Level Suite 610, 905-527-4572

Mountain Legal Services – for “mountain” area residents.
• 550 Fennell Ave. E., Suite 218, 905-575-9590

McQuesten Legal and Community Services – for residents in the “east end” of Hamilton.
• 1440 Main St. E., 905-545-0442

Hamilton City Services

City of Hamilton By-laws Office – For questions regarding the community standards and penalties set by the City of Hamilton. 905-546-2489

City of Hamilton Fire Department, Prevention Division – For information on fire safety standards, prevention and inspections. 905-546-2424, ext. 1380

City of Hamilton Health Department – For health concerns including pests, lack of heat, garbage etc. 905-546-3500

City of Hamilton Property Standards Office – For safety concerns involving the quality of your rental accommodation and maintenance of property. 905-546-2782

Or... you can reach all of these departments online at www.hamilton.ca
Banks

**Bank of Montreal**
- 50 Bay St. S. (Hamilton), 905-526-2000

**Scotiabank**
- 12 King St. E. (Hamilton), 905-528-7501
- University Plaza (Dundas), 905-627-9273
- 999 King St. W. (Westdale) 905-525-2640

**TD Canada Trust**
- 938 King St. W. (Westdale), 905-523-5111
- University Plaza (Dundas), 905-627-3548

**CIBC**
- King St. W. (Westdale), 905-572-3333
- King & Sydenham (Dundas), 905-628-6371

**Royal Bank**
- 1845 Main St. W. (Dundas), 905-521-2021
- 70 King St. W. (Dundas), 905-627-3577
- 65 Locke St. S. (at Main), 905-572-4900

**McMaster Credit Union**
- 1005 King St. W. (Westdale), 905-522-2903

Groceries

**The Barn**
- King St. W. at Paradise (Westdale)
- (at University Plaza — Dundas) — west on Main St.

**Fortinos**
- Main St. at Dundurn and Main St. W. (next to Boston Pizza)
- Main St. W.

**Hamilton Farmers’ Market**
- York Blvd. at McNab St., (open Tuesday–Thursday, 7 a.m.—6 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m.—6 p.m.; Saturday, 6 a.m.—6 p.m.)

Medical Services

**Academy of Medicine** – provides a list of member Family Practitioners accepting new patients
- 905-528-1611 (leave a message) or www.hamiltondoctors.ca

**Locke St. Walk-In Medical Clinic**
- 206 Locke St. S. (Hamilton) 905-570-0440; Monday – Friday: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.;
  - Weekends and holidays: 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

**Westdale Medical Clinic**
- 983 King St. W. (Hamilton) 905-529-4040; Monday – Friday: 9 a.m. – 10 p.m.;
  - Weekends: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.; Holidays: 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Pharmacies

**McMaster Pharmacy** – located in the lobby of the McMaster University Medical Centre
- 905-521-5019

**Westdale Pharmacy**
- 1399 Main St. W., 905-528-5144

**Campbell Pharmacy**
- 1461 Main St. W., 905-525-5422

**Shoppers Drug Mart**
- 991 King St. W. (Westdale), 905-525-7772

**Shoppers Drug Mart (open 24 hours)**
- 50 Dundurn St. S. (Dundurn Plaza), 905-522-0599

**Shoppers Drug Mart (open til midnight)**
- University Plaza (Dundas), 905-628-2909

Shopping Centres

**Jackson Square** – James St. at King St.

**Lime Ridge Mall** — Mohawk Rd. and Upper Wentworth

**Centre Mall** – Barton St. E. (near Ottawa St.)

**Eastgate Square** – Centennial Parkway and King St. (Stoney Creek)

**Mapleview Mall** – Fairview St. at Highway 403 southbound (Burlington)
HSR (Hamilton city bus):

Full-time undergraduate student fees at McMaster include a bus pass on the HSR (Hamilton Street Railway) for the 8-month academic session. There is also a bus pass available to graduate students.

Five buses will bring you to campus from the downtown area: Main West-CNIB (5B), West Hamilton (5C), Main West- Dundas (52), B-Line (10), and King (1A).

Route maps can be picked up at the MSU Compass Info Centre or at the Off-Campus Resource Centre. Call the HSR office regarding schedules at 905-527-4441. The HSR website is: http://www.city.hamilton.on.ca/living-here/transit/

Taxis

Blueline Taxi – 905-525-BLUE

Hamilton Taxi – 905-310-TAXI

GO Transit

The Hamilton “GO” station is located at Hunter St. and James St. (west of Main St.)

• 1-888-438-6646 www.gotransit.com

However, we now have a GO Station right here on campus! The ACT http://ACT.mcmaster.ca carries all GO Transit(Train & Bus) information for the Lakeshore West and the Hwy 407 West corridors coming to McMaster.

Places of Worship

Adas Israel Synagogue – 125 Cline St., 905-528-0039

Binkley United Church – 1570 Main St. W., 905-529-0740

Canadian Martyrs Catholic Church – 38 Emerson St., 905-528-4632

Grace Lutheran Church – 1107 Main St. W., 905-527-0877

Hamilton Buddhist Temple – 671 Tate Ave., 905-549-4816

Sikh Society of Hamilton – 86 Covington, 905-561-2806

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church – 22 Head St., 905-529-7094

Westdale United Church – 99 North Oval, 905-528-4215

First Unitarian Church – 170 Dundurn St. S., 905-527-8441

chapter nine

Home Sweet Home (The Art of Independent Living)

Suggested Purchases for Your New Place

• A fold-up shopping cart (for groceries as well as taking laundry to the laundromat)
• A broom, dustpan and vacuum
• Boxes of baking soda; keep one near the stove to quickly extinguish small grease fires, etc.; keep one in the fridge to absorb odours
• A first aid kit
• Light bulbs
• Dishcloth/towel and dish soap
• Pots and pans, baking sheet(s)
• Containers with lids (for dry goods - cereals, pastas, left-overs). This is a deterrent for bugs and mice
• Can opener and cork screw
• Oven mitts
• Cleaning supplies and sponges for floors, mirrors, bathtub, toilet and sink
• Garbage bags
• Waste baskets and recycling containers
• Flashlight and spare batteries (for power outages)
• An iron & ironing board
• A screwdriver and a hammer
• Toilet paper and paper towels
• Shower curtain
• Surge bar to protect your computer

Great Laundry Starts Here: A Sorting Tutorial *

Ever wash a wool sweater only to have it come out the size of a doll’s top? How about the time you thought you had all white underwear, then suddenly had pink? Or perhaps you’ve had the joy of reaching into the washer to find little, tiny bits of facial tissue on every single item? Whether you are a laundry novice or a cleaning pro, here are some sorting basics to ensure better results.
Living Off-Campus

For Starters

The key to great laundry starts with sorting your laundry by fabric type, color and water temperature. To save time, sort clothes as you put them in the hamper or laundry basket—maybe even use separate bins or rolling carts. Or, if you’re like most folks, you can dump out the pile on the laundry room floor and do your sorting there. Either way, here’s what you need to know to get started:

- **Read the labels** – All garments include labeling that outlines proper fabric care. Start here for the best advice.
- **Sort all laundry into five main groups:**
  - **Whites** – everything white, like underwear, t-shirts, handkerchiefs, etc.
  - **Lights** – including striped whites, off-whites and pastels
  - **Darks** – everything dark, like blacks, blues, browns
  - **Brights** – reds, yellows, oranges, fluorescents
  - **Delicates** – fine linens, lingerie, some synthetic fabrics
- **Keep your piles on the small side.** Machines operate better when clothes are evenly distributed and balanced. When you lay your dry clothes in the washer, keep them loose (don’t stuff), and never fill the tub more than 3/4 of the way up the sides.
- **Separate heavily soiled items from lightly soiled garments, and shake out loose dirt.**
- **Create another pile for hand-wash-only items, and use Ivory Snow.**
- **Keep dry clean only clothes separate. Take them to a professional dry cleaner.**

Advanced Tips and Tricks

Once you’ve got your basic piles assembled, take it to the next level with these easy steps:

- **Watch that you don’t mix lint generators and lint magnets.** Some lint generators include towels, sweats, and flannel. Lint magnets include corduroy, velvets, and permanent-press clothes. When in doubt, turn the lint-magnet items inside out as you sort them.
- **Empty the lint tray after every use to maximize efficiency.**

By using some simple sorting sensibility, you’re sure to see spectacular results. What are you waiting for? Start sorting!

* courtesy of Tide.com

Recipe Finder

Perhaps this is your first time living on your own, cooking meals for yourself. Or, maybe you’re just tired of K.D. and frozen meals. Check out these websites; you never know what you might discover!

- [www.Cooking.com](http://www.Cooking.com)
- [www.Topsecretrecipes.com](http://www.Topsecretrecipes.com)
- [www.Backofthebox.com](http://www.Backofthebox.com)

How To Eat On The Cheap*

When you move off-campus, your world changes. One of the biggest changes is that suddenly you have to face paying for a lot more stuff. Even food, which used to be served up in heaping mounds in the dining hall, is your fiscal responsibility.

And food can be expensive, especially when your budget is tight. But guess what? You can afford to eat —and you don’t need to live on Ramen or eat dog food —for as little as $10 per week. It’s amazing what you can buy at the grocery store for cheap if you follow a few simple guidelines:

- **Buy generic or store brand food.** Beggars can’t be choosers, and besides, it’s not that different from the gourmet stuff.
- **Buy frozen or canned fruits and veggies.** This is one instance where the more expensive stuff does taste better, but fresh produce can be super-pricey. Besides, it goes bad quickly. Frozen and canned veggies offer most of the nutrients of fresh produce at a fraction of the cost.
- **Buy juice made from frozen concentrate.**
- **Buy economy sized packages — you get more bang for your buck.**
- **Be creative with spices and seasonings.** You can make your own gourmet pasta sauces instead of buying the expensive bottled kind.
- **Focus on foods that offer a lot of calories for little money.** Don’t buy fancy sports nutrition bars; buy things like potatoes, canned tuna, oatmeal, apples, oranges, grapes, whole wheat bread, popcorn, cheddar cheese and rice.
McLingo

ACT: All-modes Commuting & Transportation - exists to inspire McMaster faculty, staff and students to bike, hike, take transit and share the ride to campus.

Arts Quad: the three buildings that are home to most of McMaster’s Arts/Humanities programs: Kenneth Taylor Hall, Chester New Hall, and Togo Salmon Hall.

CFMU: McMaster’s Radio Station - Check it out: 93.3 on your FM dial!

CHS: Campus Health Services - the on campus health services that provides clinical as well as educational services.


Cootes: the conservation area around Mac with forest areas, high hills and valleys, lakes and trails. A great place to go exploring!

CSD: Centre for Student Development - provides support for students with disabilities, personal concerns (familial, relationships, etc.), essay help, English language improvement, etc.

Drop and Add: designated periods within the school year in which you can change, remove or add another course to your schedule. Dates vary from year to year and term to term, so check your course calendar for the most current information.

EFRT: Emergency First Response Team - A volunteer organization that responds to all medical emergencies on campus, and calls in the ambulance when necessary.

Ewart Angus Centre: the back lobby of the Health Sciences Centre and a site for various information display sessions and vendors to set up shop throughout the year.

Greens: The Commerce Spirit Leaders (Reps). Look for them in their green jump/body suits.

GSA: Graduate Students Association. Located inside Wentworth House, Room 109, www.mcmaster.ca/gsa, ext. 22043

Hess: a street bazaar of bars! Hess Street is home to a number of clubs, pubs, and parties (such as The Mermaid’s Lounge, Funky Munky, Gown and Gavel, etc.). The outdoor patios ensure that this place is a flurry of activity in Hamilton - especially during the summer.

HSR: The Hamilton Street Railway - Hamilton’s bus service that all McMaster students get to ride as often, or as little, as they like during the fall and spring terms (fare is included in student fees). Make sure you put your bus pass sticker on your student card!

HUMMER: HUMmanities MEntoR - The Humanities Spirit Leaders (Reps) who are covered in blue and silver.

IAHS: The Mohawk-McMaster Institute for Applied Health Sciences – a joint initiative between the Faculty of Health Sciences (McMaster University) and Human Services (Mohawk College). This building houses various medical and support programs, as well as a cafeteria in the main lobby.

ITB: Information Technology Building

IWC: Ivor Wynne Centre - the Athletics and Recreation Centre at Mac, home of the indoor gyms, basketball courts, squash courts, the Pulse, the pool, dance studios, etc.

LearnLink: on-line software program that provides an interactive electronic environment for discussion between students and a communication tool used by instructors.

Maud: the official McMaster Marauder mascot (the bird, not the pirate).

Marmor: the official McMaster yearbook. A free one is given to all graduates, and is available for purchase to all others.

Maroons: The McMaster University Spirit Leaders (Reps). They’re dressed up in maroon jump/body suits. You’ll see them all over campus throughout the year and at all the varsity games.

MECS: McMaster Extra-Curricular Studies – a service of the McMaster Student Union which offers special interest courses (not for credit) to the McMaster Community. Courses may include “Smart Serve”, bartending, massage therapy, sign language, and many more, depending on the interests of students.

MoMac: see IAHS.

MORRIS: McMaster’s Online Library Catalogue. This database keeps track of all the campus library resources that are available to students for their studies.

MSU: McMaster Students Union - The Union is the student voice that presents student concerns to the University Administration.

MUGSI: McMaster University General Student Information - a World Wide Web application built to allow you, the student at McMaster University, to view information about yourself. This information can be any of the following: Grade Reports, Unofficial Personalized Exam Time Schedule, Course Status, Program Status, Unofficial Degree Audit Report, Residence, Personal Course Timetables.
MUMC: McMaster University Medical Centre – sharing a building with the Faculty of Health Sciences, this is a fully functioning hospital for the Hamilton community, as well as a centre for medical research projects and initiatives.

MUSC: McMaster University Student Centre – located between Mills Library and Gilmour Hall, the Student Centre is home to the majority of student services, including the MSU offices, CSD, SHS and OCRC. www.mcmaster.ca/musc

MUSS: McMaster Undergraduate Student Server - contains your email accounts and login accounts for all CIS Computer Labs.

North Quad: The North Group of Residences - these include Brandon, Hedden, McKay, Edwards, Woodstock, Whidden Halls and Les Prince.

OCRC: Off-Campus Resource Centre - maintains updated lists of available rental accommodations in Hamilton and the surrounding area. It also provides free bus route maps, zone maps, free telephones for students to contact landlords, information on housing by-laws and the Residential Tenancy Act, and personal assistance with the housing search.

OPIRG: Ontario Public Interest Research Group - a collection of clubs/societies that work on various environmental and social issues around the immediate Hamilton community as well as on a larger scale around Ontario.

PACT: People Acting Compassionately Together - serves as both a coalition and a network of various on-campus clubs interested in upholding at least one of the four principles of peace, health, human rights, and charity.

QSCC: The Queer Students Community Centre: offers resources, support, education and awareness programs, a safe place on campus and weekly social events for students of all kinds; lesbian, straight, transgendered, gay, bisexual and those who are questioning.

Quarters: University Bar/Club/Restaurant. Boasts to be the one of the largest on-campus bars in Canada! In the basement of Togo Salmon Hall.

Redsuits (Reds): The Engineering Spirit Leaders (Reps). They’ll be wearing red jump/body suits.

SCSN: Student Community Support Network – provides support with regards to housing situations, the City of Hamilton and its by-laws, & the community. Provides resource & programs for off-campus students.

SHEC: carefully selected, and specially trained student volunteers staff Student Health Education Centre - a health promotion, education and referral service for Mac students brought to you by the McMaster Students Union.

The Sil: The Silhouette - McMaster’s Official Student Newspaper. Contains lots of information important to students.

SOCS: Students Off-Campus Society - a social group for students living off-campus, offering special events and intramural sports throughout the year.

S.O.L.A.R.: Student On-Line Academic Registration - used for course drop & add; Program change applications.

SRA: Student Representative Assembly - a body of elected undergraduate students from each faculty that act as the governing body of the MSU. The primary function of the SRA is to approve and set MSU policy and make major decisions on behalf of the student body. They also approve the budget of the MSU and are responsible for making changes to the MSU Constitution, Bylaws and Policies.

SWHAT: Student Walk Home Attendant Team - volunteer teams of one male and one female provide safe, friendly accompaniment for any member of the McMaster community who calls in for a walk to or from any location on campus and within a 15 to 20 minute radius off-campus.

The Pulse: The fitness centre in the Ivor Wynne Centre. This active living facility boasts 7,700 square feet of space, great ventilation, and brand new state-of-the-art equipment designed to meet the needs of beginners to advanced participants. You will find a comfortable, motivating and stress-free environment at the Pulse.

The Tank: the auxiliary bookstore, located in Togo Salmon Hall, Room B203. It carries course materials for Years 2 and 3. The hours of operation are the same as the main bookstore. Follow the fish to find the TANK from the main Bookstore.

The Wicket: locker room service counter located inside the Ivor Wynne (athletics) Centre.

Titles: the primary McMaster bookstore. It is located in the basement of Gilmour Hall. As well as carrying all course materials for Year 4, Graduate, CCE and Certificate, it also stocks 60,000 General Book Titles, Stationery, Magazines, Confectionery, Greeting Cards, Copicards ($10 for 300 copies), time for Modem Pool Access and Laser Vouchers.

Union Market: located on the ground floor of the Student Centre, this convenience store offers both healthy and not-so-healthy snacks at great prices, as well as many household and personal items.

WebCT: an online course software program, which assists with online, course administration, quizzes and conferencing that are a grading component of some courses.

West Quad: The West Group of Residences - these include Bates, Matthews, Moulton, Wallingford Halls and Mary Keyes Residence.
chapter eleven

Accommodation Checklist
(Questions to Ask Yourself and the Landlord)

Be prepared when you go to meet the landlord:
Bring your checklist! Ask lots of questions!

Document the state of repair of your potential rental premises, including any damages. Stop by OCRC on the lower level of the University Student Centre for a sample Damage Checklist!

Location

- Is it close to public transport?
- Reasonable travel time to campus and/or within SWAT escort distance?
- Are there grocery stores, pharmacy and other amenities nearby?

Safety

- Do you feel comfortable in the neighbourhood daytime and nighttime?
- Does the room/apartment have adequate locks to provide privacy and security?
- If the apartment has a security system (buzzer or key), is it working?
- Are all windows intact and lockable?
- Are there smoke/carbon monoxide detectors in key areas?
- Is there more than one fire exit from the unit?
- Is there a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen?
- Is the entrance well lit and are any shrubs well trimmed?
- Who has access to the house key and when were the locks last changed?

Responsibilities

- Are you responsible for shoveling snow and is there a snow shovel provided?
- Are you responsible for lawn maintenance and is there a lawn mower provided?
  (Remember to ask about the summer months!)
- Are there adequate garbage containers provided and when is garbage picked up?

Facilities

- Is the parking sufficient (one space per car)?
- Will the parking area be shared with other tenants?
- Is the parking area well lit?
- Is there a storage area (shed or garage) and can this area be locked?
- Are there working laundry facilities on the premises or are they located nearby?
- Are the laundry facilities coin-operated?
- Is a fridge/stove/microwave provided in working order?
- Is the unit partially or fully furnished? What is included?

Quality of Accommodation

- Is there sufficient cupboard/closet space?
- How many people share the bathroom/kitchen or fridge with you?
- Will moving in and out be difficult because of stairs?
- Is it clean, spacious, well lit, and adequately heated?
- Is there any evidence of pests (e.g. cockroaches, mice)?
- Are the ceilings high enough and in good repair (cracks, water marks, mildew)?
- Is the carpet/floor reasonably clean?
- Are the walls in good repair (paint chipping? holes?)?
- Is the plumbing adequate? (Check the water pressure from the taps; flush the toilets.)
- Is there a good supply of hot water (ask current tenants)?
- Are there adequate garbage containers provided and when is garbage picked up?
- Are there sufficient electrical outlets (check for three prong/grounded plugs)?
- Are there adequate telephone and/or cable jacks?
- How old is the unit?
- Are the windows properly sealed with storm windows and screens?

Lease Agreements

- Is a lease required?
- What is the length of term required in the lease?
- Who is responsible for payment of utilities? (heat, water, hydro, gas, cable/internet, etc.)
- Who is responsible for subletting?
Cost

- Is rent due weekly or monthly and on what date?
- How much is the rent?
- Does the rent include all utilities?
- What is NOT included in the rent? (ask the current tenants what the monthly utility bill is like... don’t rely on the landlord for this information)
- Is a telephone/cable line already installed?
- What type of heating method is used?

Household Issues

- Does the tenant have control over heating/air-conditioning?
- Does the heating/air-conditioning work?
- If there is no air-conditioning, are there screens on the windows?
- Are overnight guests allowed?
- Are pets allowed?
- Where is the Fuse Box/Breaker Box located?

Roomers Only

- Are meals included?
- Are you allowed use of the kitchen?
- Are there restrictions on visitors?
- Do you have to be in by a certain hour?
- Is there enough privacy (e.g. privacy lock on door)?
- Is decorating allowed? Who does it?
- Are there house rules (e.g. parties, visitors, smoking, noise)?
Quick References

Off-Campus Resource Centre
www.macoffcampus.ca, email: macoffcampus@mcmaster.ca

Landlord and Tenant Board
The Landlord and Tenant Board provides information about, and answers questions regarding, the Residential Tenancies Act. 119 King St. W, 14th floor, Hamilton, 1-888-332-3234, www.ltb.gov.on.ca

Tenant Legal Advice
Each of these clinics will provide student tenants with free information and legal advice. Just let them know that you are a student when you call them.

Dundurn Community Legal Services – for residents of the downtown area and west-end Hamilton. Jackson Square, 110 King St. W., Plaza Level Suite 610, 905-527-4572

Mountain Legal Services – for “mountain” area residents. 550 Fennell Ave. E., Suite 218, 905-575-9590

McQuesten Legal and Community Services – for residents on the “east end” of Hamilton. 1440 Main St. E., 905-545-0442.

Hamilton City Services
City of Hamilton By-laws Office – 905-546-2489
(For questions regarding the community standards and penalties set by the City of Hamilton)

City of Hamilton Fire Department, Prevention Division – 905-546-2424, ext. 1380
(For information on fire safety standards, prevention and inspections)

City of Hamilton Health Department – 905-546-3500
(For health concerns including pests, lack of heat, garbage etc.)

City of Hamilton Property Standards Office – 905-546-2782
(For safety concerns involving the quality of your rental accommodation and maintenance of property)

Or...you can reach all of these departments online at www.myhamilton.ca